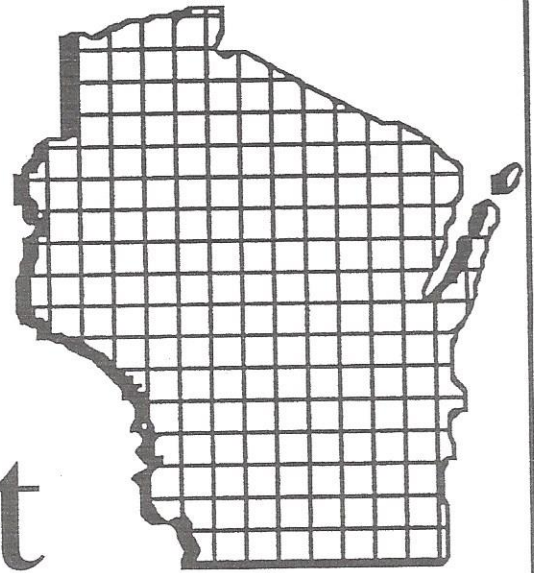


Wisconsin

Policy
Research
Institute
Report



August 2008

Volume 21, Number 5

**The Wisconsin
Citizen Survey**

August 2008

A Survey of Wisconsin Public Opinion

INTRODUCTION

The following report presents results from the twenty-ninth statewide survey of Wisconsin residents commissioned by the Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, Inc. (WPRI). The survey was conducted from August 3 to August 4, 2008. Likely voters were asked their preferences in the upcoming presidential election as well as the factors that were most important to them in choosing a new president. Residents were asked tracking questions about their family's economic circumstances and the the direction of the nation in addition to the impact of rising gasoline prices on their lives. Questions about Brett Favre and the Green Bay Packers were also included.

The first survey was conducted in January 1988, and the focus of the survey was on a series of statewide issues of continuing interest to WPRI. These issues included taxes, the state welfare system, public education, and crime and the criminal justice system. One purpose of this first survey was to establish a set of benchmark measures of public attitudes, so that changes in these attitudes could be tracked over time.

The second survey, conducted the first week after schools reopened from summer vacation in 1988, returned to a number of questions asked seven months earlier. However, additional questions were asked on each topic and several new issues dealing with environmental problems were added.

The third survey was conducted from January 5 through January 10, 1989. It examined the same general issues as in previous surveys, with some new topics and questions added.

The fourth survey was conducted from September 5 through September 10, 1989. Once again it examined the same general issues as the first three surveys, as well as several new issues including abortion, recycling programs and American Indian treaty rights.

The fifth survey was conducted from January 2 through January 5, 1990. The issues examined in this survey included taxes, the state welfare system, public education, and crime and the criminal justice system, all of which were addressed in the first four surveys. New issues consisted of recommendations to improve the quality of education in Wisconsin schools, residents' satisfaction level with efforts to reduce the sale and use of illegal drugs, and drug testing in the schools and workplace.

The sixth survey was conducted from September 4 through September 7, 1990. The issues examined in this survey included taxes, the environment, and crime, all topics covered in earlier surveys. New issues addressed included interest in governmental reform in Wisconsin, gun control and state action to reduce dependence on oil.

The seventh survey was conducted from January 4 through January 10, 1991. New issues examined in this survey included attitudes toward affirmative action and college scholarships, support for recommendations of the Commission on Schools in the 21st Century, ethics in state government, and evaluations of the performance of major state institutions. Issues covered in earlier surveys, and in this one as well, included school choice, crime, gun control and governmental reform.

The eighth survey was conducted from September 3 through 9, 1991. New topics covered in this survey included attitudes about property taxes and property tax reform, residents' views about how safe the streets in their communities are during the day and night, and attitudes towards the police. Topics covered in previous surveys and revisited in this one included crime, the environment, nuclear power, landfills and the performance of major state institutions.

The ninth survey was conducted from January 2 through 5, 1992. The survey featured numerous questions on the state of the economy and personal finances some of which were compared to the results of a national study conducted by the Gordon S. Black Corporation for the Gannett News Survey and USA Today in December 1991. The survey also included questions on education and welfare, both topics covered in earlier WPRI polls.

The tenth survey was conducted from November 15 through November 18, 1992. In addition to questions on the economy, taxes, state spending, and education, the survey explored the attitudes of Wisconsin residents about political reform, legalized gambling and American Indians.

The eleventh survey was conducted from May 20 through May 23, 1993. The survey included questions on the economy, property taxes, state spending, and the environment. The survey also explored, for the first time, the public's knowledge about and views of public officeholders in Wisconsin and their views about health care and insurance.

The twelfth survey was conducted from November 7 through November 14, 1993. The survey included questions on the economy, political institutions, public figures, health care reform and crime.

The thirteenth survey was conducted from July 18 through July 26, 1994. The survey focused on welfare and crime and included questions on state support for education, school choice, and the economy.

The fourteenth survey was conducted from September 5 through September 12, 1995. The survey included questions on views of public officials, candidate preferences for the 1996 presidential election, affirmative action, crime, and the economy.

Conducted from September 16 through September 21, 1996, the fifteenth survey included questions about the 1996 presidential election, the 1998 races for governor and U.S. Senator, views of public figures, Indian casino gambling, welfare reform, educational choice, and the economy.

The sixteenth survey was conducted from July 7 through July 13, 1997. The survey examined residents' views about the 1998 races for governor and U.S. Senators, views of public figures, abortion (including the proposed ban on "partial birth abortions"), Indian casino gambling, the death penalty, and the economy.

Residents' views about the 1998 races for governor and U.S. Senator, public figures, educational choice, welfare reform, and parole reform, and investment behavior were examined in the seventeenth survey. This survey was conducted from July 7 through July 18, 1998.

The eighteenth survey was conducted from July 22 through July 28, 1999. The survey explored residents' views about the 2000 race for president, public figures, spending on prisons and other state programs, state financial support for a new football stadium for the Green Bay Packers, and investment behavior.

The nineteenth survey was conducted from June 26 through June 30, 2000. This survey explored residents' views about the 2000 race for president, public figures, gasoline prices, the Wisconsin economy, and investment behavior.

Residents' views about the 2000 election for president and state senate, Indian casino gambling and support for off-reservation casinos were examined in the twentieth survey. The survey was conducted from October 18 through October 21, 2000.

The twenty-first survey was conducted from July 30 through August 2, 2001. This survey explored residents' views about the 2002 statewide elections, 2004 presidential election, public figures, education, cell phones, and the Wisconsin economy and investment behavior.

The twenty-second survey was conducted from September 26 through September 29, 2002, shortly after the one-year anniversary of 9/11. Among the topics covered were residents' views about the 2002 statewide elections, health insurance, water quality, the Wisconsin economy, and investment behavior.

The twenty-third survey explored residents' views about public figures including President George W. Bush and former governor Tommy Thompson, major issues facing the state, local property taxes, health care, the Wisconsin economy and investment behavior. This survey was conducted from October 6 through October 12, 2003.

The twenty-fourth survey was conducted from September 22 to September 26, 2004. The topics discussed with residents included their preferences in the presidential and senate contests, views about state spending and taxes, health care, and their views of public officials and people in a diverse set of occupations.

The twenty-fifth survey was conducted in October 2005. Issues polled included their preferences in the 2006 Wisconsin race for governor, views about limits on state spending and taxes, photo identification for voting, smoking bans, and residents' views of the ethics of various levels of government in the state.

The twenty-sixth survey was conducted from June 18 to June 19, 2006. The topics discussed with residents included their preferences in the 2006 Wisconsin race for governor, views about limits on state spending and taxes, UW system admission policies and racial preferences, their willingness to reelect incumbent politicians, their views of the ethics of various levels of government in the state, smoking bans, campaign financing, and the death penalty.

The twenty-seventh survey was conducted between September 20 and September 21, 2006. This poll asked likely Wisconsin voters their preferences in the 2006 Wisconsin gubernatorial race, their opinions on the direction of the state and nation and the state of Wisconsin's economy. In addition they were asked about their support for the death penalty and what they identified as the most important problem facing Wisconsin that state government should be doing something about.

The twenty-eighth survey was conducted from December 2 to December 3, 2007. The topics discussed with residents included questions about their views on ethical standards in state government, the power of voters to influence

state issues and spending, whose interests they think elected officials represent, term limits for elected officials, support for a state government-run health insurance system in Wisconsin and their opinions on driver's licenses, in-state tuition and public schooling for illegal immigrants. Tracking questions on the direction of the state and nation as well as on the Wisconsin economy were also included.

The Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this wave of WPRI's ongoing research program continue to be measurement of residents' attitudes on emerging and topical issues and to track change in attitudes on selected topics over time.

As was found in earlier surveys, attitudes on some issues have changed very little since the last wave. On other issues, there have been significant changes in attitudes and concerns.

The Methodology for the Study

The data in this report are based on a randomly selected sample of 600 Wisconsin residents who are 18 years of age and older. The sample was drawn from a list of telephone numbers generated by a computer. This method includes both unlisted numbers and new listings in proportion to their representation in the population. This process, and the sampling itself, is controlled by a Computer Aided Sampling (CAS) system, which monitors the entire process to insure that callbacks are made at appropriate times and that numbers are sampled correctly.

A survey of 600 randomly selected residents has a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent for percentages based on the entire sample. For an underlying percentage of 50%, for example, this means that repeated samples would produce results between 46% and 54%, 95 times out of 100. The margin of error for sub-samples, such as women, blacks, or young people, will be significantly greater.

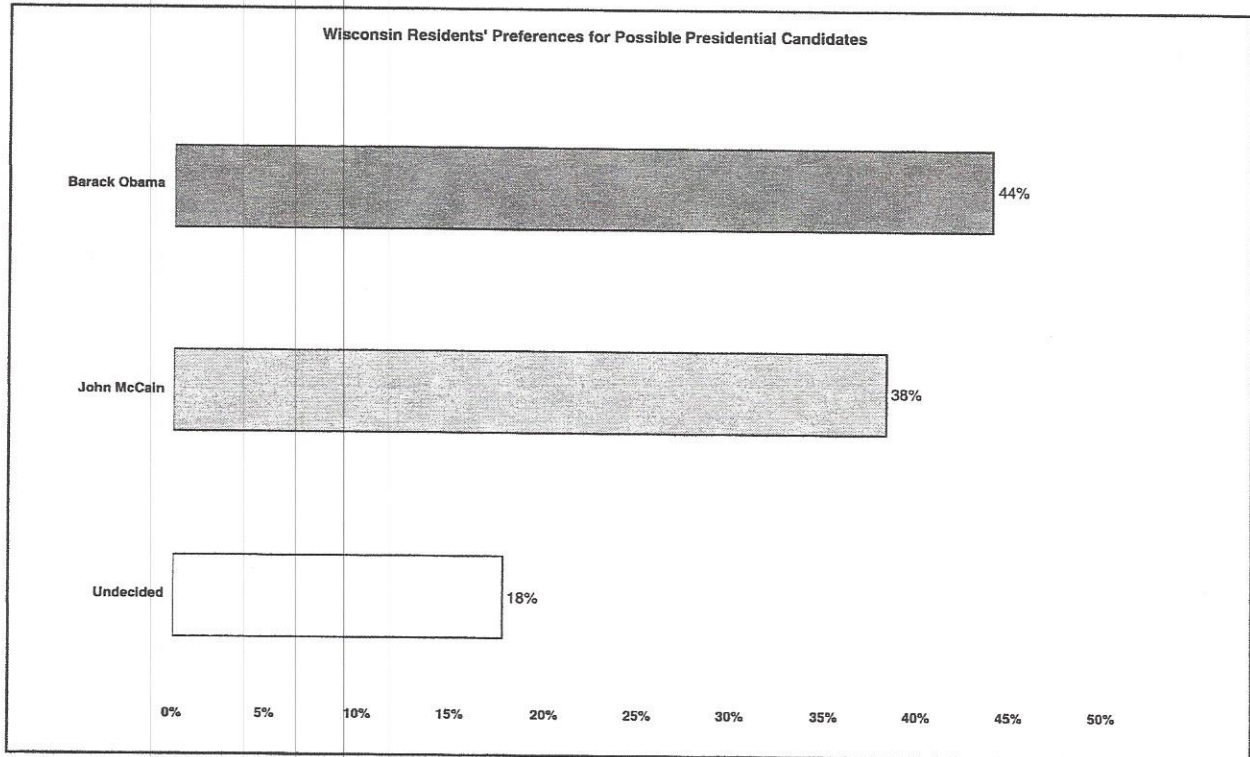
Diversified Research

Dr. Michael LaVelle, President of Diversified Research, a nationally known survey research company, supervised the project. Dr. LaVelle has a Ph.D. and has taught statistics and social research methods at the university level. He has been President of Diversified Research since 1982 and has over 30 years' experience in survey research.

BARACK OBAMA LEADS JOHN MCCAIN IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Lead is Based on Issues and Demographics

Senator Barack Obama holds a 44% to 38% lead in Wisconsin over Senator John McCain in the presidential race. Senator Obama leads the race primarily because of a combination of the most important issues on the minds of voters, the impact of President Bush and the voter's view about the direction of the country. The two issues that voters felt personally were most important to them were the economy and creating jobs (24%), and dealing with the war in Iraq (12%). On these issues Senator Obama had large leads. On the economy, Obama led Senator McCain by a 62% to 20% margin. On dealing with the war in Iraq his lead was 66% to 22%. Another issue that was frequently mentioned was improving education, where Senator Obama's lead was 73% to 10%.



For Senator McCain the issues where he did the best with voters were holding the line on taxes where his advantage was 86% to 6%, fighting terrorism, where his advantage was 82% to 11%, and illegal immigration where his advantage was 72% to 5%.

While there were other issues involved, these were the most notable differences in voter's support for either candidate.

The Bush Factor

It goes without saying that one of the unspoken parts of the support in the state is the view of President Bush. In this survey, Wisconsin voters had a favorable opinion of Barack Obama by a 51% to 31% spread. For Senator McCain it was 46% favorable to 37% unfavorable. The last time we surveyed Senator McCain's popularity was in August 2001 and at that time it was also 46% favorable but only 19% unfavorable.

However, for President Bush the numbers continue to drop. Only 31% of the people in this sample held a favorable view of him while 61% had an unfavorable view. To put this into perspective, in September 2004 53% of the

voters had a favorable view of President Bush while only 42% had an unfavorable opinion of him.

Added to this is tremendous pessimism about the direction of the country. Only 17% of the voters in this survey thought that the country was heading in the right direction while 73% thought that we had gotten seriously off on the wrong track. Since we began tracking this question in November 1993 17% is the lowest number we have ever had on the direction of the country. What does this mean in terms of the direction of election? In September 2004 44% of Wisconsin residents thought the country was going in the right direction while 52% thought it was seriously off on the wrong track. These attitudes make it much more difficult for any Republican to win in Wisconsin. Added to this is the fact that only 16% of the people surveyed in this poll believed that their own family's economic circumstances will improve over the next year, while 29% believe they will get worse and 49% believe they will stay the same. In September 2004 only 12% of voters thought their family circumstances would get worse over the next year. These long-range trends do not bode well for Republican candidates in Wisconsin this year.

Demographic Groups

In our results Senator Obama runs strongest in the city of Milwaukee with 56%, the Madison area with 58% and South East Wisconsin with 51%. Senator McCain's major strength lies in Waukesha County with 61% and Milwaukee Suburbs where he had 44% of the vote. Among voters who say their family circumstances will improve Senator McCain had 58% of the vote, however among voters who thought their family economics would get worse Senator Obama led Senator McCain by a 50% to 25% spread. The voters who thought the country was moving in the right direction gave Senator McCain a dramatic 92% lead. Among those who thought the country was on the wrong track Senator Obama leads by 57% to 25%.

Among political groupings Senator Obama leads among Democrats by 87% to 3% while Senator McCain leads among Republicans by 75% to 12%. More importantly among Independents Senator McCain actually owns a small lead of 38% to 35%. Among Liberals Senator Obama leads 77% to 10%, among Conservatives Senator McCain leads 78% to 10%, and among voters who consider themselves middle-of-the-road Senator Obama had a commanding lead of 54% to 26%.

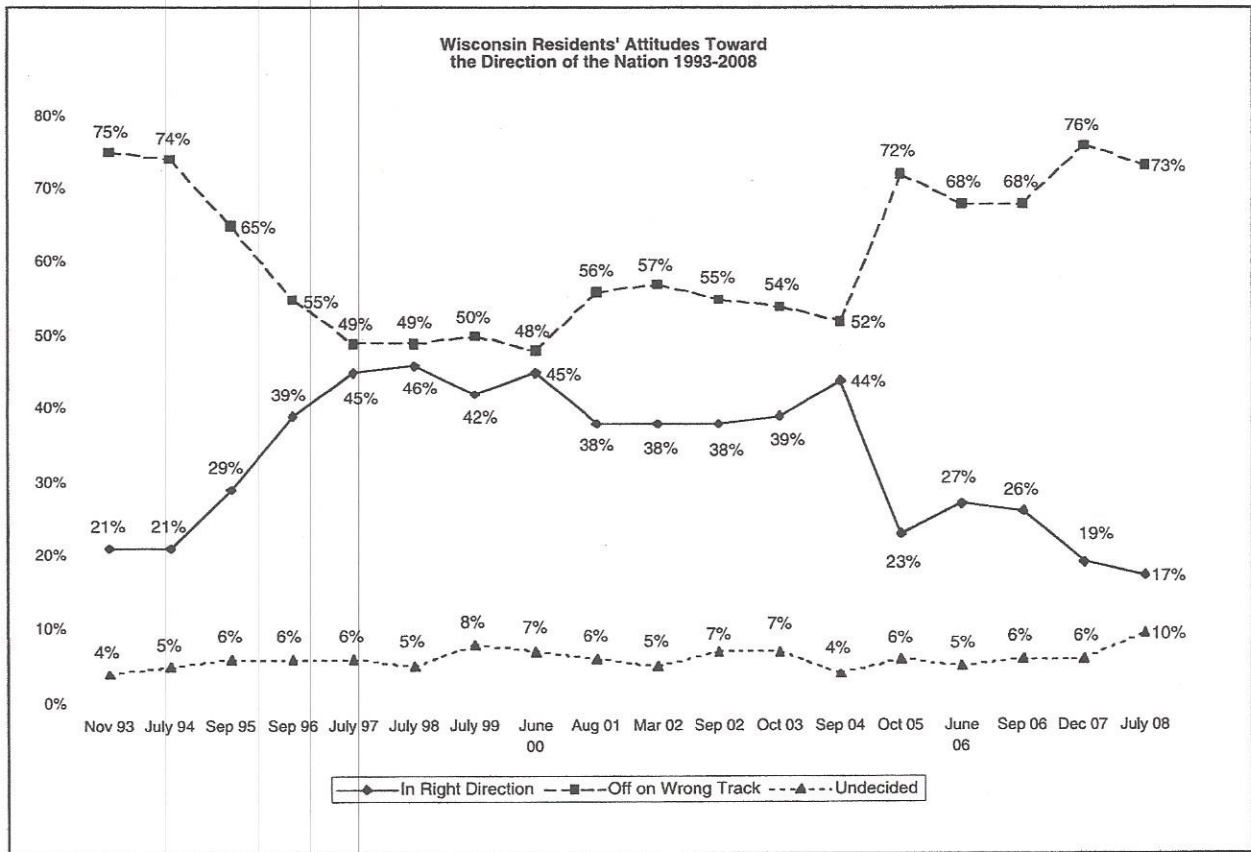
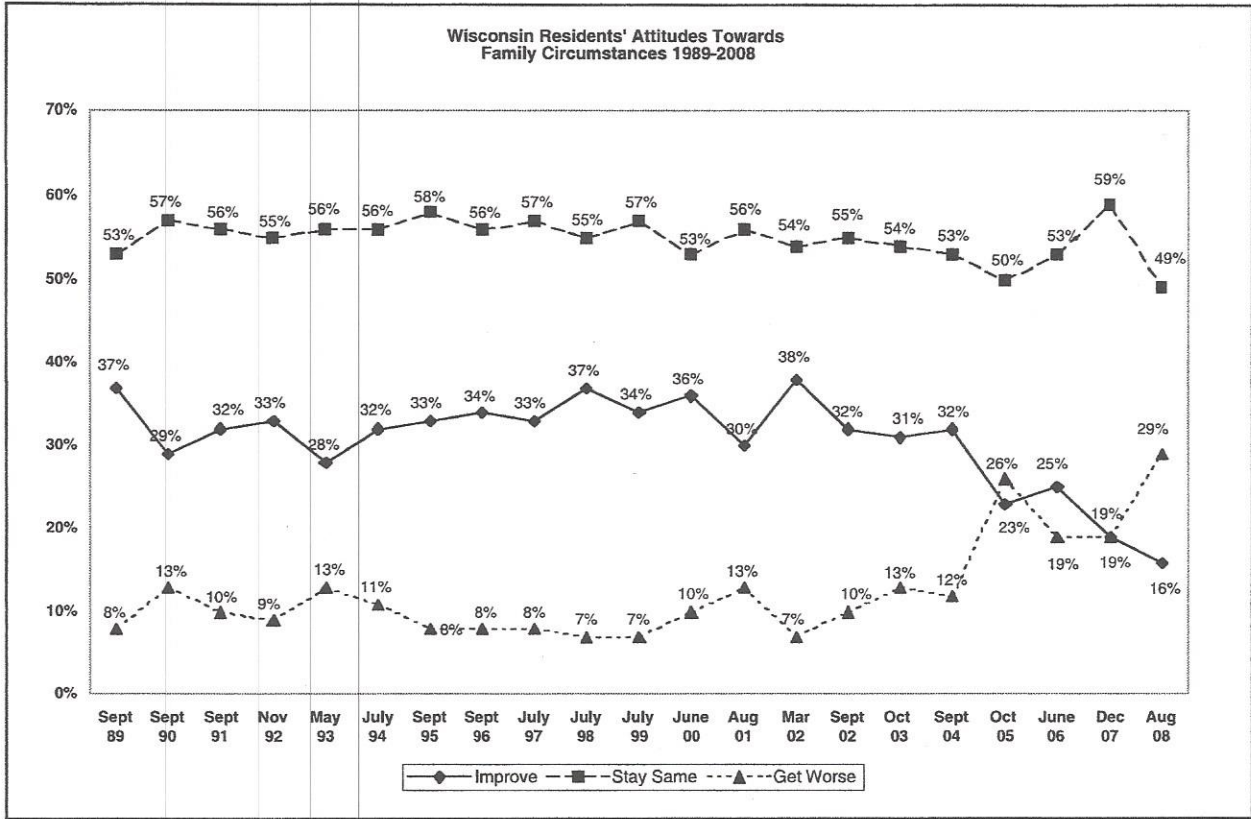
In the age groupings the key results are that Senator Obama does very well with younger voters. Among those 18-to-24 his lead is 44% to 30% and among those 25-to-34 it is 51% to 40%. However among senior citizens (those 65 and older) Senator McCain leads 46% to 33%. In terms of education Senator McCain leads among those with some high school (52% to 44%), high school graduates (41% to 39%). Barack Obama, however, leads among those who attended college (48% to 34%) and among those who graduated college his lead is 45% to 41%.

Income wise Senator McCain leads among those making \$15,000 or under by 52% to 35%. He also leads with those making over \$35,000 by 51% to 37%. Senator Obama leads among all other income groups.

In terms of race Senator Obama has a slight lead among white voters (42% to 41%), however among blacks in this particular survey Senator Obama's lead was 94% to 0%. Among males Senator Obama has a lead of 43% to 40%; among females it increases to a 45% to 37% advantage over Senator McCain.

If the election for President were held today between John McCain for the Republicans and Barack Obama for the Democrats, for whom would you likely vote?

	Total	Hold Line Taxes	End Dependence Foreign Oil	Protect Social Security and Medicare	Crime and Drugs	Deal with War in Iraq	Improve Education	Economy Create Jobs	Reduce Government Spending	Fight Terrorism	Clean up Corruption in Washington	Combat Global Warming	Illegal Immigration	Lower Price of Gas
John McCain	38%	86%	56%	30%	51%	22%	10%	20%	51%	82%	43%	24%	72%	40%
Barack Obama	44%	6%	31%	47%	25%	66%	73%	62%	29%	11%	39%	66%	5%	23%
Undecided	19%	8%	13%	23%	24%	12%	17%	18%	20%	9%	18%	10%	23%	39%



RESIDENTS' VIEWS OF MAJOR PUBLIC FIGURES 1999-2008

	July 1999	June 2000	Aug 2001	March 2002	Sept 2002	Oct 2003	Sept 2004	Oct 2005	June 2006	Sept 2006	Dec 2007	Aug 2008
George W. Bush												
Favorable	56%	50%	50%	75%	59%	50%	53%	43%	37%	40%	30%	31%
Unfavorable	22%	36%	43%	20%	35%	45%	42%	51%	59%	51%	61%	61%
Neutral/Did Not Recognize Name	22%	14%	7%	5%	6%	4%	4%	6%	4%	9%	8%	8%
Barack Obama												
Favorable	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	51%
Unfavorable	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	31%
Neutral/Did Not Recognize Name	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	18%
John McCain												
Favorable	N.A.	N.A.	46%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	46%
Unfavorable	N.A.	N.A.	19%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	37%
Neutral/Did Not Recognize Name	N.A.	N.A.	35%	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	18%

N.A.: Not asked

It is also important to note that in this survey only 82% of Wisconsin voters have made a decision about which candidate they are likely to vote for in the November election. This is obviously a tight election with Senator Obama holding a lead outside the margin of error. There are also some reasons to believe that if the current trend lines, particularly how people view the direction of the country and issues like the economy and Iraq, continue to be the most important issues for Wisconsin voters Senator Obama will be a very difficult candidate to defeat in November. But there is still some hope for Senator McCain, particularly with Independents and older voters where he has a lead over Senator Obama.

WISCONSIN RESIDENTS BACK THE GREEN BAY PACKERS — NOT BRETT FAVRE

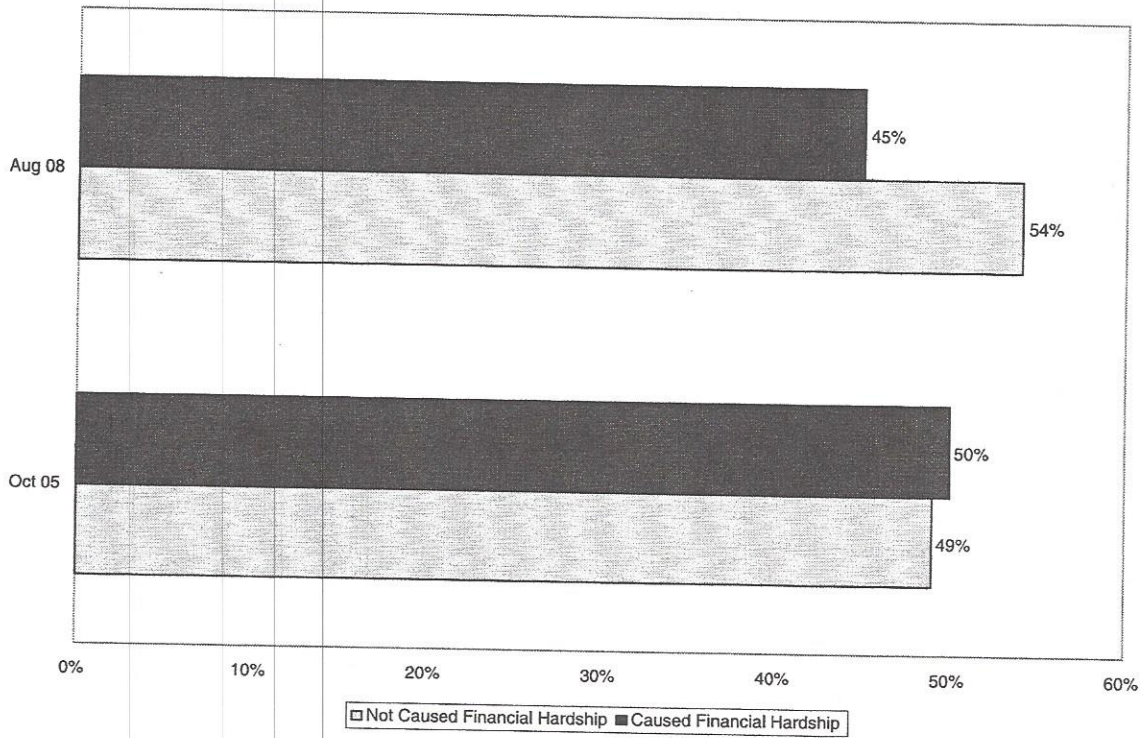
In the ongoing clash between Brett Favre and Green Bay Packer management, the Wisconsin public clearly favors Packer management. By a 60% to 16% margin Wisconsin residents believe that General Manager Ted Thompson and Coach Mike McCarthy are more concerned than Brett Favre and his supporters about the long term future of the Green Bay Packers. In addition, Brett Favre, who over the last several years was by far the most popular individual in the state of Wisconsin, has seen a sharp decline in his favorability among Wisconsin residents.

The support for Thompson and McCarthy runs through every major section of the state. In fact, the strongest support comes from the City of Milwaukee where 75% of the residents support them while only 3% favor Favre. In the Green Bay area, Thompson and McCarthy enjoy 71% support while Favre and his supporters are at only 15%.

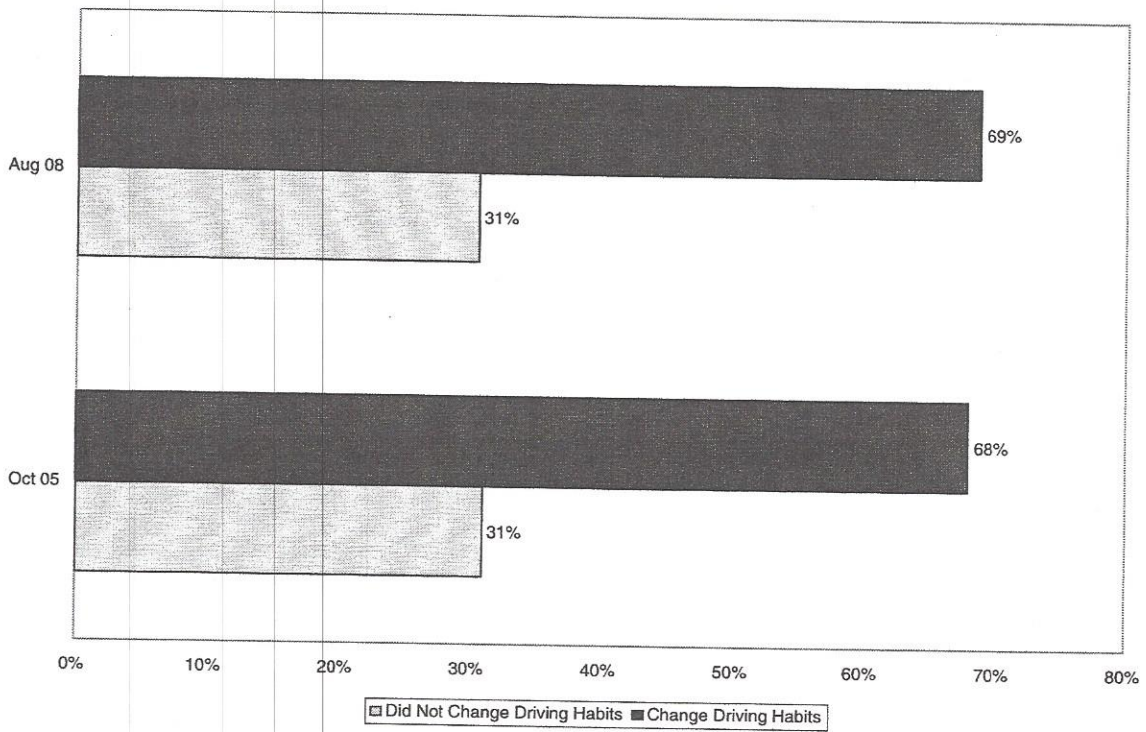
The other result, which is almost as stunning, is that only 47% of the people in Wisconsin have a favorable view of Brett Favre, while 34% have an unfavorable view. This is a major change from survey results within the last several years. Last December, 73% of the people in Wisconsin had a favorable view of Favre and only 7% had an unfavorable view. This was very similar to a poll taken in September 2004 when 75% of Wisconsin residents viewed Favre favorably while only 9% viewed him unfavorably.

Clearly Brett Favre's popularity in Wisconsin has taken an enormous hit over the last several weeks. One potential reason is that, unlike other professional franchises, the Green Bay Packers is a nonprofit corporation owned by tens of thousands of residents throughout the state who obviously believe that the team is more important than the individual. Whatever the reason, it is clear that Wisconsin residents will back their team and its management over any individual at any time.

Higher Gasoline Prices and Financial Hardship in Wisconsin Households



Higher Gasoline Prices and Changes in Wisconsin Driving Habits/Travel Plans



Now I'd like to get your feelings about some PUBLIC officials who have been in the news. I'll read the name of a person and I'd like you to tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of him or her. If we come to a person whose name you don't recognize, you don't need to rate that person. Just tell me and we'll move on to the next one.

Let's start with Brett Favre. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of him?

August 2008	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Favorable	47%	42%	54%	56%	31%	54%	52%	36%	57%
Unfavorable	34%	47%	33%	31%	43%	26%	31%	31%	25%

December 2007	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Favorable	73%	61%	88%	69%	82%	69%	67%	80%	63%
Unfavorable	7%	18%	2%	5%	4%	15%	8%	5%	7%

September 2004	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Favorable	75%	71%	80%	90%	79%	88%	76%	67%	75%
Unfavorable	9%	8%	9%	3%	6%	6%	2%	18%	7%

POLL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What about your own family's economic circumstances? Do you expect them to improve, stay the same, or get worse during the next year?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Improve	16%	16%	21%	15%	17%	20%	17%	6%	16%
Stay Same	49%	47%	45%	63%	63%	26%	42%	48%	49%
Get Worse	29%	23%	29%	21%	19%	42%	40%	43%	27%
Don't Know	8%	14%	5%	2%	1%	12%	0%	3%	9%

Would you say that things in this COUNTRY are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Right Direction	17%	21%	18%	38%	17%	14%	11%	10%	16%
Wrong Track	73%	76%	68%	47%	76%	71%	84%	84%	72%
Don't Know	10%	3%	14%	15%	7%	16%	6%	5%	12%

If the election for President were held today between John McCain for the Republicans and Barack Obama for the Democrats, for whom would you likely vote?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
John McCain	38%	32%	44%	61%	39%	35%	23%	36%	41%
Barack Obama	44%	56%	35%	25%	44%	37%	58%	51%	42%
Undecided	18%	12%	22%	15%	18%	28%	19%	13%	17%

From the following list, which is personally most important to you in deciding your vote for president?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Strengthening the economy and creating jobs	24%	19%	24%	11%	32%	17%	25%	24%	28%
Dealing with the war in Iraq	12%	14%	7%	8%	14%	5%	25%	10%	12%
Ending our dependence on foreign oil	8%	5%	14%	2%	7%	11%	9%	6%	9%
Holding the line on taxes	8%	12%	13%	13%	4%	6%	6%	7%	4%
Protecting Social Security and Medicare	7%	4%	6%	19%	4%	16%	2%	10%	6%
Fighting terrorism and keeping America safe	7%	12%	4%	10%	9%	2%	3%	8%	8%
Improving education	7%	19%	7%	11%	4%	7%	14%	1%	1%
Reducing wasteful government spending	6%	1%	5%	2%	4%	0%	5%	12%	10%
Cleaning up corruption in Washington	5%	0%	5%	6%	5%	8%	7%	7%	2%
Combating global warming	3%	1%	0%	0%	5%	11%	0%	0%	5%
Lowering the price of gasoline	3%	0%	1%	4%	3%	3%	0%	4%	5%
Stopping illegal immigration	2%	3%	2%	5%	3%	2%	0%	0%	3%
Fighting crime and drugs	2%	3%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	4%
DK/Refused	7%	7%	9%	11%	6%	11%	4%	10%	3%

Have higher gasoline prices caused you to change your driving habits or travel plans?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Yes	69%	73%	66%	64%	64%	74%	63%	78%	71%
No	31%	26%	34%	34%	36%	26%	37%	21%	28%
DK/Refused	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%

Have recent price increases in gasoline caused any financial hardship for you or your household?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Yes, have caused financial hardship	45%	47%	37%	52%	35%	52%	42%	58%	48%
No, have not caused financial hardship	54%	51%	61%	48%	65%	48%	58%	40%	51%
DK/Refused	1%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%

Who do you think is most concerned about the long-term future of the Green Bay Packers - Brett Favre and his supporters, or general manager Ted Thompson and his coach Mike McCarthy?

	Total	City of Milwaukee	Milwaukee Suburb	Waukesha County	Green Bay Area	La Crosse Eau Claire	Madison	South East	Rest of State
Brett Favre and his supporters	16%	3%	20%	10%	15%	25%	6%	16%	23%
Ted Thompson/Mike McCarthy	60%	75%	57%	67%	71%	41%	65%	54%	51%
DK/Refused	24%	21%	23%	23%	14%	35%	29%	30%	26%